

STATEMENT OF DAVID R. HINSON, ADMINISTRATOR-DESIGNATE OF THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION, BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION, CONCERNING HIS NOMINATION TO SERVE AS FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATOR. JULY 20, 1993.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I welcome the opportunity to appear before the Committee today on my nomination to serve as Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration. I am deeply honored to have been nominated by President Clinton for this position. I appreciate very much your willingness to schedule this hearing in such a timely manner in order to consider my qualifications for this position.

During my years of experience in aviation, I have developed high respect for the job done by the FAA. Safety has always been the agency's primary mandate and highest priority. I assure you that, if I am confirmed, safety will remain the FAA's top priority.

Few areas of industry are as dynamic as the aviation industry. Throughout its history, the FAA has managed to adapt to rapid changes in order to provide the safety and operational services upon which the American traveling public depends. In recent times, the United States and the international community have experienced particularly dramatic changes that directly affect the aviation industry and, in turn, the FAA.

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Over the past decade, the airline industry has gone through a protracted cycle of expansion and contraction, continuous route changes, service to new and expanded hubs, and changes in aircraft types and sizes. A new generation of state-of-the-art air transport aircraft is under development, with the need for certification by the FAA's technical experts. A new generation of navigation technology will also be coming on line.

The international aviation environment has experienced significant growth as well. Today, more than ever before, the U.S. aviation system is an integral part of a global system. Globalization in aviation has become a reality.

The end of the Cold War has brought even more change, and with it challenges and opportunities. Air routes can now be established over vast land masses that were formerly off-limits. There are new opportunities to convert downsized or closed military bases to civil aviation use to meet growing capacity needs. And manufacturers who relied heavily on the development and production of defense products must now look to the civil sector. For example, NASA and the FAA are working with manufacturers to investigate the technical and economic feasibility of a high speed civil transport aircraft.

Satellite technology for air navigation is also a reality, holding great promise for revolutionizing the world's air traffic control

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systems. The potential benefits this new technology offers to the aviation community argue for the earliest feasible deployment, and call for an aggressive FAA program to help reach that objective.

The FAA has always been, and today remains, the world's foremost civil aviation authority, at the forefront of international standardization and technical improvement. The FAA's challenge is not only to adapt to the kinds of changes that are transforming the aviation environment, but to anticipate and, to the extent possible, shape the future evolution of aviation. FAA cannot afford to "play catch-up," if we are to respond to the dynamics of a changing world. It may be proper to consider "strategic alliances" between the government and the private sector in aerospace as international competition becomes more intense. Increasing cooperation with industry and the international community, improved planning, and an active research, engineering, and development program are key to managing change effectively while recognizing the realities of an austere budget climate.

If confirmed, I will work hard to provide direction and leadership for the FAA to meet the many challenges it faces. I assure you I will be a strong advocate for American aviation. I will work closely with the Congress to assure adequate resources for the FAA to do its job. The FAA's foremost mission will remain the safety of the traveling public. My earliest experiences with the FAA

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impressed upon me the importance of the FAA's safety mission, when, as a young Naval aviator, I was guided safely back to base by FAA radar after losing the navigation equipment on my aircraft. Since that time, a long-standing working relationship with the agency has only enhanced my great respect for the people of the FAA and the capable way in which they meet their far-reaching safety responsibilities. I have every confidence in the agency's ability to continue to meet these responsibilities and to meet inevitable, dramatic changes.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I look forward with great anticipation to the chance to serve as FAA Administrator. If confirmed, I pledge to you my best efforts to provide the American traveling public with the safest and most efficient air transportation system possible. I also commit to working closely with you and other aviation leaders in the Congress on the many challenges that face us.

That completes my prepared statement. I would be pleased to respond to questions you may have.